



Communities of Practice Small Group Facilitation Guide Spring 2023

Thank you for attending the 2023 Inclusive Excellence Symposium. As a way of helping to continue the impactful conversations begun at this year's event, we have created this Small Group Facilitation Guide. The intention of the Guide is to provide support for folks interested in expanding their learning within the community of their workplace through guided discussion and engaging with further resources. Should your area need in-person support for these ongoing conversations, please reach out to us and we will do our best to accommodate that need should capacity allow. In the meantime, we hope you will use this Guide to practice the values of Our Common Ground together and explore the impacts of this year's incredible speakers on your individual and shared understanding of respect, justice, openness, innovation, integrity, and responsibility.

FACILITATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Consider the space in which this discussion will take place and how many people may be in attendance; how might you situate the room; will it be virtual or in-person; are there accommodation needs
- We recommend allowing for a discussion of at least 60 minutes if possible
- There is no need to include every question below in your conversation. You may discover new questions that arise or topics of connection that are not addressed in the questions offered here.
- Open the space with a sharing of names, pronouns if folks are comfortable, and a brief overview of some Group Aspirations (we have some recommended below, but feel free to create your own!).
- As the facilitator of the space, you are there to manage time and offer connections and structure. No one in the space is an expert in anything other than their own experiences, so no need to feel like you have "all the answers".

GROUP ASPIRATIONS:

- Lead with love – recognize that we come to the space with the intention of learning together; no one here is trying to cause harm, but instead we intend to come together in a spirit of compassionate curiosity
- Low ego = High impact – while we will all have our own thoughts, experiences, and reactions in the space, the more we are able to decenter ourselves and recenter the collective, the higher impact we might have as a group learning together
- Move at the speed of trust – give ourselves grace as trust grows in the space; these conversations can be very vulnerable and there is no expectation to share beyond what feels comfortable

FEMINISM FROM AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE

FEATURING: MAIMOUNA YOUSSEF (AKA, MUMU FRESH)

HIGHLIGHTS AND CONNECTIONS

- Maimouna Youssef's contribution to IES centered the physical and spiritual manifestations of Our Common Ground values as she wove stories of the impact of white settler colonialism on Indigenous understandings of the divine feminine.
- While she named the stripping of life, language, culture, spiritual practice and more from Indigenous communities, she also centered the ways her Choctaw ancestors reclaimed their Indigeneity and maintained connection to their practices and traditions and then passed those on to her.
- In particular, Maimouna articulated a deep knowing of the ways feminine energy has always meant a knowing of Mother Earth and the abundance she offers us to heal the traumas that divide us. She provided an opportunity to practice this connection through the sharing of yarrow tea, gifted to those in the room as a way of deepening our own relationship with the Earth and those who have come before us.
- By reflecting on her time in the music industry and the roles she was told women were meant to fulfill in that industry, Maimouna also shared about her awakening to sing/perform only that which God has called her to do in the service of that which is greater than her; in service of uplifting the Indigenous communities that raised her and that continue to struggle for their lands, waters, humanity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Much of what Maimouna brought to the space could be considered ceremony. In fact, she named that her practice of Indigenous ceremony "saved her". In what ways have you interacted with ceremony in your life and work? What impact have those rituals or practices had?
- Consider the ways you have been taught to be in relationship with the Earth and where those lessons came from. How does your connection to the Earth influence your relationships with others, if it does? If it does not, why might that be?
- Maimouna spoke of healing trauma in many of the same ways we heard other speakers name - healing that which divides us and that which keeps us from being whole ourselves: "The inner world is where the revolution is...you can't heal nobody else if you're not healed." What does this idea of healing mean to you? Is it the work of higher education spaces to help folks heal or to heal others?
- This talk brought up the Our Common Ground values of responsibility, integrity, and justice, asking us to consider the ways we live our truth out loud, follow the calling we have been gifted, and remain in connection with the Earth and others to heal and seek justice. Without seeking perfection, how might these values move you toward your own ongoing becoming?

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Stay engaged with Mumu Fresh by visiting her website: <https://maimounayoussef.com/>
- Or find her on Instagram @mumufresh
- Maimouna named the impact of the landmark 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Read more about this legal breakthrough and learn about its legacy from Indigenous perspectives on its 40th anniversary: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-indian/2018/11/30/native-perspectives-american-indian-religious-freedom-act/>
- She also referenced her performances and connections to Standing Rock. To learn more about the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, please visit their website: <https://www.standingrock.org/> To learn more about the history of the Dakota Access Pipeline protest, please visit: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/tag/standing-rock-protest>